



## **FAQ SHEET**

### **LEAD IN SCHOOL DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS**

**Why is lead a concern?** The EPA and NJDOE/NJDEP are concerned about the potential for elevated lead levels in schools and has developed guidance for schools on how to conduct a lead testing program. Lead at levels exceeding the action limit in drinking water may pose a health threat to children and adults. Children are at higher risk as lead is absorbed more easily due to growth. Lead can cause learning or behavioural disabilities, hearing loss, high blood pressure, lower I.Q. in children, kidney damage, premature birth and other adverse health effects.

**What are the sources of lead in drinking water at the school?** The primary/common sources are lead containing plumbing components in the school's water distribution system that are in contact with the water. Lead leaches into the water through corrosion of these components including but not limited to piping, faucets, fountains, coolers, valves, meters, solder, ice machines and sediment build up. Even though the Public Water Supplier may provide source water that meets all federal and state health standards the critical issue is that the school may end up with too much lead in the water from the plumbing.

**Where do I test the water in the school?** The EPA and NJDEP strongly recommends testing for lead at sources used for drinking and cooking. A plumbing profile is developed to assist in creating the sampling strategy. Common sources include faucets/taps, drinking fountains, bottled water dispensers, plumbing components and ice machines. Sampling can include both initial first draw screening samples and follow up flush samples to determine sources of lead.

**How do I fix (remediate) the problem if lead levels exceed the action limit?** There are multiple remedies that may be employed and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. It is important to understand that a combination of short term, interim and permanent techniques may be utilized during the process. Some examples of remediation techniques include flushing, providing bottled water, shut off problem outlets, cartridge or filter units, replacement of drinking water units/parts, plumbing replacement or reconfiguring of plumbing.